

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 20, the resolution "Concerning Economic, Humanitarian And Other Assistance To Northern Somalia." To understand the importance of this resolution, we must look to the recent history of politically, economically and war torn Somalia.

Cities in Somalia have traditionally been centers of trade, administration and education. Now they lie shattered. In Hargeisa, for example, 80 percent of the buildings have been destroyed, supply infrastructures like electricity and water have been smashed, the schools left roofless and ruined, the hospitals devastated and the citizens have suffered without the most basic facilities. Anti-personnel mines and unexploded shells lie buried in the rubble of the city, still deadly, forbidding the clearance of much of the debris. Such terrifying conditions in what had been stable and well-established cities symbolize the legacy of Siad Barre's disastrous years of power.

As the Africa Watch Committee set down in its 1990 report on the region, "It is difficult to overstate the Somali government's brutality towards its own people, or to measure the impact of its murderous policies." Two decades of the presidency of President Siad Barre have resulted in human rights violations on an unprecedented scale, which have devastated the country. Even before the current wars, the human rights of Somali citizens were violated systematically, violently and with absolute impunity. The most bloody conflict, and the longest lasting, has been the war in the North against the Isaak clan, the largest in the region." Recounts given by the people who have and continue to be exposed to physical violence and verbal abuse in Somalia paints a picture of dead, wounded, displaced people and impoverished and demolished cities.

Mrs. Fozia Mohamed Awad, speaking of the problems in Northern Somalia recants "I personally lived through the 1985 massacre, when fifty to sixty men were driven out of prison and shot by government soldiers. This happened in the city of Burao, and there were no trials or court appearances, they were just shot down. After these killings, the government confiscated our property, established control posts at the entrances of our towns and along the highways and nothing could happen without them being bribed."

One morning the government army arrived at, Fozia Awad's village, approaching from a dried-up riverbed. They opened fire, killing all they could see—people and animals. They killed her mother and two other women relatives. In all, sixty people were killed on that occasion at the water point. Then they went to the nearby village and killed everybody there, except a few who fled into the bush.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, H. Con. Res. 46 is extremely important in that it expresses the sense of Congress deploring the escalation of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea which has resulted in the massive and senseless loss of life, as well as substantial economic hardship to the peoples of both nations. This measure strongly urges both Eritrea and Ethiopia to bring an immediate end to the violence between the two countries and strongly affirms U.S. support for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Framework Agreement. In addition, H. Con. Res. 20 calls on the United Nations Human Rights Commission and all human rights organizations to investigate human rights abuses in connection with

the forced detentions, deportations, and displacements of populations caused by this conflict.

I would like to thank my colleagues, Congressman CAMPBELL and Congressman PAYNE for introducing this important resolution. This resolution presents a commitment by the United States to the people of Somalia. It is for the spirits of the thousands of people who have died in Somalia and 60,000 more who have been detained or forced from their homes who are crying out for world intervention. This resolution is a first step.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 20.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.J. RES. 2

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of House Joint Resolution 2, of which I am not particularly fond, and to which my name was added without my knowledge in error.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

#### CELEBRATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF GENEVA CONVENTIONS

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 102) celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and recognizing the humanitarian safeguards these treaties provide in times of armed conflict.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 102

Whereas the Geneva Conventions of 1949 set basic humane standards of behavior during armed conflict, and are the major written source of international humanitarian law;

Whereas these Conventions prescribe humane treatment for civilian populations, wounded, sick and shipwrecked military personnel, and prisoners of war during armed conflict;

Whereas these Conventions recognize the International Committee of the Red Cross as an independent and neutral organization whose humanitarian mission is to protect and assist civilians, prisoners of war, and other victims of armed conflict;

Whereas "the red cross in a field of white" is not an ordinary organizational symbol, but one to which the international commu-

nity has granted the ability to impose restraint during war and to protect human life;

Whereas the American Red Cross and its sister national societies are members of a world-wide organization rooted in the provisions of international humanitarian law and dedicated to the promulgation of its principles, among which are the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

Whereas the international programs of the American Red Cross bring relief from natural and manmade disasters abroad, contribute to the development of nonprofit relief organizations abroad, and include the teaching of international humanitarian law throughout the United States;

Whereas many domestic programs of the Red Cross in health and safety, disaster, blood, youth, and service to the members of the Armed Forces of the United States grew out of a response to armed conflict;

Whereas, thanks to the efforts of Clara Barton and Frederick Douglass, the United States ratified in 1882 the first convention for the amelioration of the condition of wounded and sick members of the armed forces in the field;

Whereas in 1955 the United States ratified the Geneva Conventions of 1949; and

Whereas the Geneva Conventions of 1949 are among the most universally ratified treaties in the world: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),*

#### SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

The Congress—

(1) recognizes the historic and humanitarian significance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and celebrates the 50th anniversary of the signing of these treaties;

(2) exhorts combatants everywhere to respect the red cross emblem in order to protect innocent and vulnerable populations on every side of conflicts;

(3) commends the International Committee of the Red Cross and the more than 175 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, including the American Red Cross, on their continuing work in providing relief and assistance to the victims of war as prescribed by these Conventions;

(4) applauds the Promise of Humanity gathering organized by the American Red Cross in 1999 in Washington, D.C., as an important reminder of our responsibilities to educate future generations about the principles of international humanitarian law;

(5) commends the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the more than 175 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, including the American Red Cross, for their work in educating the world's citizens about the humanitarian principles of international humanitarian law as embodied in the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

(6) invites the American Red Cross during this anniversary year to assist Congress in educating its Members and staff about the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

(7) supports the anniversary theme of the International Committee of the Red Cross that "Even War Has Limits"; and

(8) calls upon the President to issue a proclamation recognizing the anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and recognizing the Conventions themselves as critically important instruments for protecting human dignity in times of armed conflict and limiting the savagery of war.

#### SEC. 2. GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949 DEFINED.

In this concurrent resolution, the term "Geneva Conventions of 1949" means the following conventions, done at Geneva in 1949:

(1) Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (6 UST 3114).